accord has been worked out with secret accounts held by Indians with Department with regard to unveiling the secrecy of accounts in Swiss banks in connection with the accounts of Indians over there;

(b) if not, what are the reasons for delay and by when the accord is likely to be signed; and

(c) whether it is possible to unveil secret accounts held by Indians without signing accord with Swiss authorities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c) The Swiss Federal Law known as Federal Act on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal matters (IMAC) provides for rendering of mutual assistance in criminal matters where acts with respect to which assistance is sought satisfy the test of dual criminality, and the State seeking assistance guarantees reciprocity to Swiss authorities. To ensure reciprocity, Government have decided that letters be exchanged between the two Governments. Our Mission in Berne has been suitably advised to make arrangements for the exchange of letters. The draft of letters to be exchanged is being examined by the Swiss Government whose final response is awaited. Unless the proposed letters are exchanged between the two Governments, it is not feasible for the Government of India to approach the Swiss Government for obtaining any information in this regard.

Swiss Bank Accounts of Indians

2555. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Shri N. D. Tiwari, the then Finance Minister said last year that without signing accord with Swiss authorities identity of illegal transaction in Swiss Banks by Indians can be established; and

(b) how far the negotiations with Swiss authorities have progressed for pursuing illegal accounts involving criminal offence by Indians?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Swiss Federal Law known as Federal Act on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (IMAC) provides for rendering of mutual assistance in criminal matters where acts with respect to which assistance is sought satisfy the test of dual criminality, and the State seeking assistance guarantees reciprocity to Swiss authorities. To ensure reciprocity, Government have decided that letters be exchanged between the two Governments. Our Mission in Berne has been suitably advised to make arrangements for the exchange of letters. The draft of letters to be exchanged is being examined by the Swiss Government whose final response is awaited. Unless the proposed letters are exchanged between the two Governments, it is not feasible for the Government of India to approach the Swiss Government for obtaining any information in this regard.

FERA Violation Cases against Shri L. M. Thapar

2556. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the latest position with regard to the FERA violation cases against Shri L. M. Thapar; and

(b) whether Shri Thapar has deposited the money due against him; if so, what are the details in this regard?